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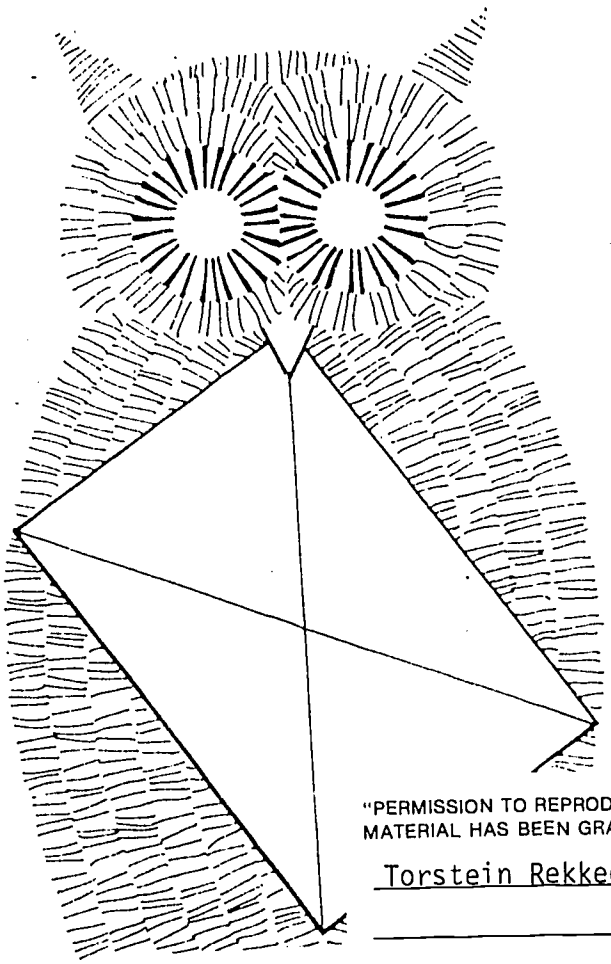
ABSTRACT

This preliminary report describes part of NKI-Skolen's planned contribution to a cooperative study on student non-start and early withdrawals in correspondence education, which was created by the Norwegian Association of Correspondence Schools. A project is explained which will examine the organization of the initial phases of a student's correspondence study by assigning students in an experimental group to personal tutors who will integrate the normally-separated administrative, teaching, and counseling tutor functions. A background section provides a research review on the drop-out problem in distance education, non-start and early withdrawals, and student reasons for discontinuation. Further experimental studies with special relevance to the research problems and procedures are briefly presented. Under experimental procedures, the tutors' role in the study is examined in detail. Finally, research design and procedures are explained, including the courses, student selection, questionnaire design and data collection, and a summary of the research problems. A five-page bibliography is included, as well as a questionnaire (in Norwegian) designed for both experimental and control groups, which contains items on correspondence study in general, the tutor's work, and counselling, to contrast their perceptions on different aspects of distance study. (LMM)

Torstein Rekkedal

Introducing the personal tutor/ counsellor in the system of distance education

Project report 1: Experiment description



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PREFACE

This report describes an experiment carried out at the NKI-skolen at the present time. The experiment is concerned with trying out what we consider to be "a new tutor role" in a relatively specialized system of distance education. The experiment has just started, and another report concerning our experiences and the results from the experiment will be prepared after the conclusion of the experiment period, hopefully at the end of 1981.

In the title of this report I have used the term "distance education", which I consider to be a broader term than "correspondence education". I prefer to use the term "distance education", because I find that the aspect of distance between tutor/institute and the student is the main characteristic of our instructional system, in which we try to apply whatever method, medium and administrative means which is considered to be educationally effective and cost-efficient to each separate case. This report will also show that both the experimental group and the control group are parts of an educational system using other means of communication than the pure correspondence between the student and the tutor. In my opinion this is also the case for most institutes today using the term correspondence education. As there is no need for differentiation in this report, the terms will be used synonymously. The "tutor" is the person who collects, comments upon and evaluates the student's papers.

The experiment described here, is NKI's contribution to a cooperative project on non-start and early withdrawals in correspondence education, initiated by the Norwegian Association of Correspondence Schools. The Association has received some financial support to the project from the Ministry of Church and Education. In this project we plan to prepare an analysis of the non-start and early drop-out problem in correspondence education, develop measures to help the student cope with the assumed difficulties during the initial stages of the studies, and carry out experimental research on the effects of such measures.

In principle, such measures can be built into the study material, and/or they may include efforts to increase the pedagogical quality of other elements of the correspondence education system, such as introductory courses in study techniques, more general introductions and information, study guidance, systematic follow-up, telephone tutoring etc.

In an educational system where most of the students study one single course (not necessarily the same for all students), it seems reasonable to build as many as possible of the educational measures into the pre-produced material for the individual courses. However, in a system where the students normally study several courses either simultaneously or in succession, it seems logical to concentrate efforts on developing educational support also in elements of the system other than the individual course materiel. Especially will this be the case for the NKI-skolen in this project, where we concentrate on the initial phase of the studies. In our system the same course may be the first course for one student and a later one for another. Thus, during the planning stages of this project, it was decided that NKI would experiment on organizing the starting phase of the studies by introducing measures outside the individual course material, while the other participating schools would experiment on the effects of designing special introducing units in the course material. The aims of both kinds of measures would be to reduce the number of student with-drawals before submission of the first assignments and other early withdrawals and increase the number of successful completions.

By withdrawals we mean students who disrupt their courses without completing the total number of study units, i.e. not submitting all the assignments. The term withdrawal is used synonymously with drop-out. Students who withdraw or drop out without submitting at least one assignment are described as non-starters. By early withdrawals we simply mean students who drop out during the initial stages of the course without defining any exact number of study units.

On the basis of previous research, experiences at NKI and intensive interviews with students, we have found that a number of assumed improvements can be obtained by introducing a new role for the correspondence tutor or a new way of organizing the tutor's work. We believe that this new tutor role represents a general improvement of the correspondence teaching system, however, in this experiment we examine the effects of this re-organization in the initial phases of the studies only. We also believe that the introductory phase is of extreme importance for the student's probability of study success.Thus, possible positive effects from the organization tried out in the experiment, may probably be generalized to apply to later phases of the studies as well.

In the planning of this research I have had great benefits from discussions with my colleague Svein Qvist-Eriksen at NKI and the project group in the Norwegian Association of Correspondence Schools. Knut Finsen has been employed as teacher in charge of students allocated to the experimental group. He has also made important contributions to the design of the experimental variable.

Stabekk, July 1981

Torstein Rekkedal

C O N T E N T S:

	Page:
PREFACE	3
1. SUMMARY	7
2. BACKGROUND FOR THE EXPERIMENT	12
2.1. The drop-out problem in correspondence education	13
2.1.1. Discontinuation	13
2.1.2. Non-starters and early withdrawals	14
2.1.3. Reasons for discontinuation	15
2.2. Other research concerning the drop-out problem	19
2.2.1. The initial phases of study	19
2.2.2. Following up students	20
2.2.3. Turn-round time	21
2.2.4. Telephone tutoring	23
2.2.5. Social isolation	24
2.3. The correspondence tutor	26
2.4. Counselling	30
3. EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES	32
3.1. Personal tutor	33
3.2. Employment	33
3.3. Integrated tutor - counsellor	34
3.4. Turn-round time (circuit time)	35
3.5. Telephone tutoring	35
3.6. Initial follow-up	35
3.7. Follow-up on inactive students	36
3.8. Other aspects of the tutor's work	36
3.8.1. Introduction to study techniques	36
3.8.2. Preproduced tutor comments	37
3.8.3. "Tutor's presentation"	37
3.9. Summary of the tutor's role in the experiment	38

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES 40

4.1. The courses and the selection of students 40
4.2. Research design 41
4.3. Questionnaire design and collection of data 41
4.4. Summary of the problems to be investigated 42

BIBLIOGRAPHY 43

Appendix 1 49
Appendix 2 51
Appendix 3 54

1. SUMMARY

Research within distance education seems to show that drop-out is a more serious problem during the first part of a course than when the students have acquired some experience with the subject and the study method.

In 1980 the Norwegian Association of Correspondence Schools initiated a cooperative project on the non-start and early withdrawal problem. The schools participating in the project will try to analyse why so many students enrol in correspondence schools and never start their studies, and what we can do to reduce the rate of non-start and drop-out. Also certain experiments will be carried out to test some of the possible hypotheses on how to reduce non-start and drop-out rates. The experiments will deal with different aspects of the correspondence study system.

This report describes the experiment within this project which is carried out at the NKI-skolen during 1980-1981.

For more than 10 years we have carried out surveys to examine, among other things, the drop-out problem in correspondence education. We have also arranged experiments where the real effects of certain educational or administrative efforts, introduced to increase efficiency in teaching and reduce drop out rates, have been examined. These experiments have dealt with study technique, follow-up of newly enrolled students, follow-up of inactive students, turn-round time of assignments and preproduced tutor's comments. To a large extent the results from these experiments have been so promising that the measures examined have been permanently applied.

Chapter 2 in this report gives the background for the "personal tutor/counsellor" experiment with a view of research on the drop-out problem in distance education. Different survey studies on non-start and drop-out as well as studies examining student reasons for discontinuation are discussed. Further, experimental studies with special relevance to our research problems and procedures are briefly presented.

During the planning stage of the cooperative project we carried out som intensive interviews with a group of new students. These interviews confirmed that the students seemed to be satisfied with correspondence study in general. However, most students seemed to have one common problem: They were reluctant to contact the administration, the counsellors or the tutors when they met difficulties, and they were uncertain about whom to contact in order to seek advice on different problems. We felt that the rationalization and "industrialization" of distance education which seems to be necessary to cater for large student groups and at the same time keep down expences, probably result in a division of work and a depersonalization of instruction. This situation seems to cause difficulties for many new students.

Thus, we decided to design an experiment where we wished to personalize teaching by introducing what we called "the personal tutor/counsellor in the system of distance education". In this experiment one person integrates the roles of different tutors in different subjects, as well as student advisors in the ordinary distance education system. Within the work of this tutor we also try to integrate other measures which we believe are important to help the distance students to complete their studies successfully. In short, we wish to construct a system which would constitute a "new" way of organizing the tutor's work during the initial phases of the correspondence study, where emphasis is put on the didactic functions of the distance tutor and the communication between one tutor and one student.

The students selected for this experiment were assigned to a personal tutor who will follow them closely during the first 3 to 11 courses of a composition of courses leading to a certain qualification. By this formal change in organization, a number of aspects of the tutor's work and the division of work between the administration, the counsellors and the tutor will be changed.

The control group will not lose any of the measures introduced on the basis of theory and research during the last 10 years, and which now is a normal part of the NKI distance teaching system. The main difference between the treatment of the experimental group and the control group is that the experimental students will communicate with one personal tutor integrating administrative, teaching and counselling functions, which normally are separated. The experimental role of the tutor is described in some more detail below, which summarizes the description given in chapter 3.

Personal tutor

Students studying a course composition will normally have to communicate with a number of different tutors, who all feel responsible mainly for their own subject. Lack of insight into the student's total situation and the total teaching system may be an obstacle to giving maximum support. In the experiment we are arranging a system where the student communicates with one tutor only during a certain part of his/her studies. One of the drawbacks of this would be that the tutor would have to teach more than one subject and thus do a less specialized job. However, we believe that the advantages are evident. The tutor's work will become more varied. The tutor and the student will achieve a better mutual understanding. The tutor will be able to point out the relationship between the courses and help the student to transfer knowledge gained through one course to another. This organization also opens the possiblity for the tutor to take responsibility for general counselling of the student, and also opens the gate for the other arrangements described below.

Employment

Correspondence tutors are normally paid on a per assignment basis. It is, of course, difficult to find out which consequences this fact may have for the work carried out by the individual tutor. However, we can easily think of possible negative effects on teaching quality. The experimental tutor is employed on a fixed salary basis. This should ensure that time spent on the individual student will be in accordance with the student's real needs.

Integrated tutor - counsellor

The full time student advisors do not normally have sufficient subject knowledge to help the student with subject related learning problems which may arise. Very often the advice given may constitute some kind of "pseudo counselling", which may reduce the student's possible feelings of isolation, but which doesn't really help to solve learning problems or difficulties with study planning and organization. A system where these roles are integrated in one person increases the possibilities of solving the student's problems, whether they concern subject matter, study organization, personal/social difficulties, administrative procedures or financial matters.

Turn-round time

By employing the tutor part-time or full time within the school's administration, the turn-round time may be reduced. In this experiment all assignments are normally returned to the student the same day they are received, and two postal handlings (from the school to the tutor and back) are removed from the system. The part-time tutors who take care of the control group, are requested to return the assignments within one day, as a normal routine. Nevertheless, the experimental group will be ensured a considerably lower turn-round time.

Telephone tutoring

Telephone tutoring is included in the experiment. The tutor/counsellor will phone all students who have given their telephone number, in connection with the assignments submitted, and as part of the student follow-up routines.

Initial follow-up

The tutor in the experiment will contact all the experimental students approximately 10 days after dispatch of the study material. If possible, the contact is established by telephone. The other students will receive a form letter. All students will be contacted about 1 month later by phone or letter, and again during the third month after their enrolment. As part of the normal routines, the control group will receive a form letter signed by one of the counsellors, approximately 10 days and 1 month after enrolment. The difference in treatment of the experimental group and the control group will mainly be in the degree of individualization achieved through the personal tutor/counsellor.

Follow-up of inactive students

In the ordinary NKI system students who have been inactive for a whole calendar month receive a post-card. A sequence of two form letters and questionnaires follows the card if the student doesn't contact the school or start to study again during the next two months. The experimental students in this project are followed up in a similar way. The main difference is again that these contacts are established by the tutor/counsellor either by telephone or by personal letters.

Introduction to study techniques

Some years ago NKI introduced a course in study technique as the first course (1 submission only) for students enrolled in programmes consisting of a number of single courses. The tutor teaching the experimental group comments on and evaluates the work of the students in this course as well, while the control group is assigned to a separate teacher in this course.

Preproduced tutor comments

The use of preproduced tutor comments is not specifically defined in the experiment. Complete and detailed solutions to all assignments are developed, including standard comments. These are enclosed with the students' assignments, according to the tutor's judgement of the individual student's needs.

"Tutor's presentation"

All NKI's part-time tutors have prepared a personal presentation of themselves. The presentation sheet is sent to the student together with the first assignment returned from the tutor. It contains a personal presentation, advice on the course and a picture of the tutor. Students in the experimental group receive the presentation of the tutor together with the study material. Consequently, these students may in fact be able to establish contact with the tutor on their own initiative, even prior to their first submission. If they do not contact the tutor when problems arise, the tutor will contact them in any case. The tutor's presentation describes the tutor's role and also the posibility of telephone contact.

Chapter 4 describes the research design and procedures. The students involved in this experiment are enrolled in course compositions consisting of a number of single correspondence courses towards an examination. The experiment takes place only during the first formally defined stage of the studies. Thus, the number of courses taken by each individual student in the experiment range from 3 to 11.

New distance students were selected into the experiment during a five months' period from 01.11.1980 to 01.03.1981. They were randomly divided into one experimental group (last digit in the identification number 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8) and one control group (last digit 0, 3, 6, 9). The experimental students were assigned to one personal tutor, while the control students were part of the ordinary NKI system, involving several tutors, general counsellors, automatic follow-up etc.

Data about study progress, rate of completion, will be collected at the time of cancellation, completion of the first stage of study or 8 months after enrolment. A minor questionnaire will be sent to students in both groups. The questionnaire contains items on correspondence study in general, the tutor's work and counselling to examine whether different aspects of distance study are preceived differently by the students in the two groups. The other data will be collected from the files and study records.

From the experiment we hope to find some of the answers to the following questions:

1. Will this organization have any effect on the number of students starting their studies (defined by submitting one or more assignments)?

2. Will this organization have any effect on drop-out rates during the early stages of study?

3. Will this organization have any effect on pace of study and student activity?

4. Will this organization effect student attitudes towards correspondence education in general and/or specific aspects of correspondence study?

5. What will the consequences of this new tutor role be regarding the organization of other aspects of the correspondence education system as well as the costs of correspondence education?

It may seem that interpreting the results from this experiment will involve many problems. This is indeed correct. However, we found it important to try out a complete system, and decide whether correspondence teaching can be organized in some other way than what has been usual today. Research has shown that each individual effort involved in the experiment may have positive effects on facilitating the situation for distance students. Still, we felt that it remained to be seen whether the integration of the measures achieved by introducing the personal tutor/counsellor would constitute a better offer. We also wanted to examine if such a personalized system can function within the frames set by the financial, administrative and organizational demands of a modern distance teaching system.

2. BACKGROUND FOR THE EXPERIMENT

There is no doubt that drop-out is the problem which has been given the highest priority among researchers within correspondence or distance education for the past ten to twenty years. In some cases it may be discussed whether the rate of drop-out or completers constitutes the most significant criterion for decisions about the effects of educational improvements or changes in the system of distance education. Normally, we would assume that a grown up person participating in adult education should be free to take responsibility for main decisions about enrollment and, if desired, cancellation of his/her studies. Thus, for some "drop-outs" cancellation of the studies may be a more goal oriented decision than continuing the studies to a formally defined completion. However, in most cases, we believe that the majority of the enrollees actually intend to complete the courses, or wish to progress as far as possible towards the completion of the course. In adult education the student's real competence or maybe his/her feelings of success probably increase in some way relative to the quantity of studies completed, and in most cases we believe that the efforts are not totally wasted even when the studies are not completely brought to an end.

It is of course possible that some efforts to increase the total quality of distance education, e.g. better individual counselling during the prospective phase or initial phase, may have the effect that the students get a better knowledge of the situation, studies and future possibilities, which cause some students to cancel their studies at an early stage. If so, this is probably a desirable result. But statistically, if the educational system basically is sound, we believe that any real improvements in quality regarding educational methods, media, presentation, administration or counselling will result in increased study persistence and/or a reduced drop-out rate, and that both results must be looked upon as positive effects.

The starting point for this project is that the rate of drop-out, especially in the starting phase, in correspondence study generally seems to behigher than we ought to accept, i.e. a large proportion of newly enrolled correspondence students encounter difficulties which make them give up their studies - some in fact give up before they have really started (in correspondence education defined by submitting the first assignment). In this project we shall examine what the correspondence institute and/or the correspondence tutor can do to reduce these initial difficulties as much as possible.

In the following sections we shall present some research which we consider to be of relevance for our experiment.

2.1. The drop-out problem in correspondence education

At the NKI-skolen we have earlier carried out some survey studies concerning recruitment, persistence and drop out in correspondence education (Rekkedal 1971, 1972a, 1973a, 1976, 1978a). We shall briefly comment upon some questions concerning the drop-out problem, which also have been described in earlier reports.

Comparing drop-out rates within different correspondence courses in different institutes is very difficult. The courses vary in content, level, quantity of work, degree of difficulty and organization. Also the educational methods and media involved differ from course to course. Furher, there are also large differences between criteria used in connection with course drop-out and cancellations and how drop-out and success are defined. In some surveys all students enrolled are taken into consideration. In other studies only individuals who really have started submitting assignments are defined as students (see Rekkedal 1978a p.30). Nevertheless, the quantitative data published seem to indicate that the rate of drop-out in correspondence education normally is considerably higher than in full-time face to face education, and that the number of students dropping-out is especially high in the beginning of the studies (see for example Glatter & Wedell 1970), but not generally higher than in other forms of part-time studies.

We shall give some examples.

2.1.1. Discontinuation

In a large American study from 1956 among more that 40.000 college level enrolments in 32 institutions, 60 per cent of those who enrolled completed their courses, and 73 per cent of those who submitted at least one assignment went on to completion. At high school level nearly 18.000 enrolments in 24 institutions were examined. 58 per cent of those enrolled completed, while 69 per cent of those who submitted one or more lessons completed (Research Committee of the Division of Correspondence Study) reported from Childs (1966 p.130).

In a review of many studies carried out from 1929 to 1965 the completion rates using the NUEA-formula (National University Extension Association), which counts students who have started submitting assignments only, range between 35 and 75 per cent. Among all enrollees the completion rates are reported to range from 35 to 63. Donehower (1968) found a completion rate of 60 per cent among 905 university correspondence students using the NUEA-formula.

The German correspondence institute, Studiengemeinschaft Werner Kamprath, has reported that the rate of completions among students studying different courses is 28 per cent only (Peters 1965).

Jones & Wylie (1970) reports that 55 per cent of the enrollees completed a 20 study unit course which was introduced by two weeks of face-to-face instruction. Pfeiffer & Sabers (1971) report completion rates between 24 and 75 per cent on courses containing 8 to 24 study units. The smaller the courses the larger the completion rate.

In an interview Holmberg (1971) has reported some statistics concerning the completion of single courses at Hermods. He reports that approximately 30 per cent have completed the studies. However, completion is defined as submitting at least 70 per cent of the course assignments. Anderson and Tippy (1971) reports that approximately 60 per cent of the students who participate in correspondence study do not successfully complete the course.

A few years ago, in connection with some data collection at NKI-skolen initiated by the Norwegian State Council for Correspondence Schools we found that 82 per cent of all students enrolled had completed a 3 unit course. 44 per cent had completed a 12 unit course (another 28 per cent were still working on the course). Quite a lot of data about drop-out and completion of correspondence courses has been reported in connection with experimental research. Some of these results will be described in section 2.2.

Some student groups have received special attention, e.g. students whose courses have been paid by "Veterans Administration" in USA. Reports show that only 25 per cent of these students complete their courses. (Veterans Administration 1972).

In Norway the study activities among seamen in the merchant navy have been followed with interest. Hui (1969) says that only 20 per cent of seamen enrolled in correspondence courses follow their courses to an end. Skår (1973) reports that 80-90 per cent of the seamen discontinue their courses. At the NKI-skolen we have found that 90 per cent of seamen enrolled in course compositions (a sequence of single courses) had dropped out 2.5 years after enrolment (Rekkedal 1972a).

We shall briefly review some results concerning drop-out surveys on course compositions. Probably these are the most interesting in relation to our experiment described in this report. In an Australian study it was shown that 34 per cent had completed their university courses through correspondence/distance study, 8-10 years after enrolment (Sheath 1965). A study carried out among Japanese high school students reports that 57 per cent had dropped out after five years (Schramm 1967).

In our earlier surveys at the NKI-skolen we have collected a considerable statistical material on completions and drop-out in relatively large course compositions. For the enrolment years 1967/68, 1968/69 1969/70 we found that about 75 per cent of the students discontinued, without reaching their original study goal 2.5 years after enrolment (Rekkedal 1972a, 1973a, 1978a). The Open University has also published data on course completions/drop-out. It is reported that about 50 per cent of the formal and ultimately registered students sit for an examination (McIntosh et al. 1979).

2.1.2. Non-starters and early withdrawals

By the term "non-starters" we mean students who enrol for a course and who never start to submit in assignments. In most cases we do not know whether these students have really started to study the first lesson, nor do we know which problems they have encountered.

By "early withdrawals" we mean students who have sent in at least one assignment and then drop out during the first part of the course the exact number of study units completed not defined. In fact, the majority of the drop-outs quit during in the initial phases. Practitioners and researchers in the field seem to agree that in order to help students towards a successful completion, one should concentrate on establishing extra supporting counselling and teaching efforts in the beginning of the courses. The results from quite some research studies show that normally between 10 and 30 per cent of the distance study enrollees never start to send in assignments. Pfeiffer & Sabers (1970) report percentages between 13 of 32 on courses consisting of 8-32 study units. Jones & Wylie (1970,1974) report 10 and 11 per cent, Harter (1969) says that 34 percent of the students who discontinue never start to study. Bradt (1956) states this figure for military students at USAFI to be more than 50. Wedell & Perraton (1968) report that 21 per cent never start, while James & Wedemeyer (1959) report one third of the students to be non-starters. Hui (1969) mentions that 34 per cent of the enrolled correspondence students in the merchant navy never started their studies. In Donehower's (1968) survey among university correspondence students the non-starters constituted 14 per cent of all enrollees. In the surveys carried out at NKI (Rekkedal 1972a,1973a) we have found that approximately 11-12 percent never submit any assignments.

Beside the fact that there is a number of students who never start to study, there are some who drop out during the first part of the course. Harter (1969) reports that 75 per cent of the drop-outs withdrew before they had completed 1/4 of the course. James & Wedemeyer (1959) assume that a student who has completed 1/3 - 1/4 of the course, probably will complete the whole course.

In our previous research at NKI we have shown that about 50 per cent of the drop outs from the enrolment year 1967-1968 had completed less that 9 study units (Md = 8.3) (Rekkedal 1972a). For the two next years' enrolments the number of study units completed by 50 per cent of the drop-outs had increased to 9 and 11 study units respectively (Rekkedal 1973). In our last survey (enrolment year 1972-1973) this number was 14.5 study units. From a survey by Sheath (1965) it is reported that 33 per cent of the students withdrew during their first year of study, while the average withdrawal rate the subsequent years was 15 per cent. Similar figures are reported by Smith (1976). McIntosh et. al. (1976) report that the students of the Open University may register provisionally for 3 months. About 20 per cent withdraw during this period ("early withdrawal").

From the studies only briefly mentioned here, we may safely conclude that both non-starting and early withdrawal are problems worth serious consideration by distance educators.

2.1.3. Reasons for discontinuation

Some research has been carried out to disclose the reasons for student withdrawal in correspondence education. We shall present some of the findings from these studies.

Houle (1964) states the following reasons why adults, who initialy engage in education, give up:

1. Some students accomplish their goals before the end of the course.
2. Some students have low academic aptitudes.
3. Some students encounter problems in their personal lives.
4. Some students are dissatisfied with instruction.
5. Some students are dissatisfied with administrative policies and procedures.

And finally,

6. Many adults do not know how to learn.

The first point above is often emphasized by adult educators (e.g.James & Wedemeyer 1959). This reason has also been given by students who drop out of NKI courses. However, we feel that this reason should not be generally overemphasized. The danger exists that it could become an excuse for adult educators to continue practices which could be changed to the better.

Another important cause is mentioned by Zahn (1964 p. 36):

> "Adult education courses are usually advertised and may be over-advertised or misleadingly advertised, attracting thereby students who are unable to profit from the instruction or students who are seeking knowledge the course is not intended to provide".

Zahn was analysing problems in connection with recruitment to university extension courses i USA, but her observation can also be applied to adult courses and distance courses in Europe, including Norway.

Nevertheless, we feel that the quality of advertising as well as the quality of counselling offered to prospective students has improved considerably in Norway during the past 20 years.This is probably due to a growing concern about these matters among distance educators and also the work done by the State Council for Correspondence Schools.

Hosmer (1965 p. 37) suggests the following solutions to the drop out which problems, we find rather drastic:

> "To cut dropout rates in correspondence courses, it is recommended that schools:
>
> Find out which groups of enrollees are most likely and which are least likely to graduate.
>
> In advertisements and information reaching prospective enrollees, emphasize those aspects of the work which have been found to attract high-yield groups and play down those aspects of the work which attract low-yield groups.
>
> Minimize expenditure of management time and money in trying, by mail, to induce unresponsive students to produce work. Instead, invest that time and money in improving the content and validity of the examinations of the course."

These recommendations would probably not fit in with the Norwegian adult education policy where adult education is considered primarily to be an offer to the educationally disadvantaged and is also a means of equalization (NOU 1976: 46).

Course advertisement will also involve a balance between "over-advertising", and therby attracting some students who are unable to complete the studies, and "under-advertising" which may result in not attracting students who could very well benefit from the course. Most earlier experiences show that people who already have a relatively high formal education are overrepresented among adult students (see e.g. Nilsen 1963, Isaksen 1973, Finstad & Hansen 1976).

A recruitment policy as suggested by Hosmer, would probably result in adult education contributing to even larger educational differences than it does today. Probably, a better solution would be to try to identify the difficulties which are encountered by different groups of students and search for measures which would increase the probability of their success.

In our first survey of NKI we found that "lack of time" was the most frequent reason given by the drop-outs. Further, in order of frequency, the reasons mentioned were:"changed to other school work", "economic reasons", "major changes in the plans for the future", "illness" "building my own house", "called into the army", "personal reasons" and "marriage". Reasons for dicsontinuation which are within the schools direct control were mentioned by very few former students (Rekkedal 1972a). Similiar results are reported by others.

Holmberg (1971) reports the following reasons for discontinuation of correspondence courses at Hermods, in order of frequency:

1. Changed to another school
2. Changed plans for the future
3. Demanding employment responsibilities and lack of time.
4. The studies not practically useful.
5. Illness
6. Personal reasons.
7. Study difficulties.

The method of data collection is not mentioned. From an American survey Sloan (1965 p. 8) reports the following important reasons for non-completion (also ranked from the most frequent to the least frequent reason):

"1. Job required too much time - interfered with study
2. Lack of time
3. Taking residence classes at the same time
4. Lost interest - found correspondence work boring, uninspiring
5. Illness
6. Rescheduled correspondence to residence work."

James and Wedemeyer (1959 p. 90) studied the reasons for non-completion given during an intensive "case-interview". The most important reasons were the following:

"Too busy, could not find time, and so on
Major change in job or career plans
Illness, birth, or death, in family
Course too difficult, wrong course
Substituted campus course work."

In a study carried out by Veterans Administration (1972) in USA the major reasons are reported to be:

"1. Could not devote sufficient time to the courses
2. Lost interest
3. The courses were not what they had expected them to be
4. The courses were too difficult".
(Veterans Administration, 1972, p. 8).

Some other reasons for discontinuation are reported by Harter (1969):

"The most frequently given reason for discontinuing involved the instructor's late return of lessons. ... Of the reasons given for discontinuing, problems involving the instructor and administrative procedures were mentioned most often. In order of frequency, other major problems centered on problems involving: the enrollees motivation and his learning orientation, other demands on the enrollees time, new developments a hanges in the enrollee's plans, content of the course itself, and miscellaneous reasons" (Harter 1969,p.ii).

In an article by Kuiper (1966) study difficulties are mentioned more often than lack of time.

In a follow-up survey in Britain Harris (1972) found the following reasons for discontinuation to be the most important: "demands of my job", "domestic responsibilities" and "strain of studying as well as working". Less important were "sosial", "changed career plans" and "syllabus too dull and uninspiring". "Accident and illness", "costs" and "sufficient study" were of relatively little importance.

Thus, from most of the studies reported we may draw the conclusion that the most frequent reasons for discontinuing distance study, given by the students, seem to be more or less independent of the method itself. The reasons seem to be related to the problem of studying part-time in general. With som few exceptions only a small minority of the students in the different research studies admits to have study difficulties or states that they are dissatisfied with the course or administrative procedures.

In our last longitudinal survey at NKI (Rekkedal 1976, 1978a) we used an elaborate method to collect data about reasons for discontinuation.

We asked the students to indicate the most important single reason for discontinuation. In addition, they were asked to tick in the questionnaire whether some given reasons had been "very important" of "some importance" or of "no importance". This approach showed that what we would call "method independent" reasons still were mentioned most often as the most important reason for giving up the studies, while reasons such as "difficulties in organizing the studies", "correspondence study method not suitable" "course material not satisfactory", "turn-round time of assignments for submission too long", "dissatisfied with the tutors' corrections and comments" have been very important or of some importance to between 38 to 9 per cent of the students (reasons mentioned from the highest to the lowest in frequency).

Thus, when one looks into the discontinuation problem in a larger context, it seems that reasons stemming from the method itself, the system quality or administrative procedures really play their part in a student's decision to drop out from correspondence study.

2.2. Other research concerning the drop-out problem

During the past years several research studies have been carried out in Norway as well as in other countries within the field of distance education, partly as well controlled methodological experiments. The experiments have often been designed to try out different procedures and newly introduced measures in correspondence education.

Drop out rates in the different groups have been the usual most important criterion variable to decide the value of new developments. In the following paragraphs we shall discuss the results from some of these research studies with a priority to studies relevant for the design of our experiment.

2.2.1. The initial phases of the study

Some research projects have concentrated on the starting phase of the studies. At NKI we have carried out an experiment where students in the experimental group were offered an introductory course in study techniques. Further, in the same experiment a system of individual following up letters to students was introduced. The letters were sent to the students at enrolment and 14, 28 and 42 days thereafter. Regrettably, the experiment had to be interrupted due to administrative changes before a sufficient number of students had been selected into the groups. With som reservations we concluded that: "... individual following up results in an earlier start" (Donehower (1968) concluded that there is a significant relationship between the lapse of time between enrolment date and first lesson and completion rate.)"... a larger percentage of students who have been followed up makes formal contacts to the administration, and the majority expresses a positive attitude to the counselling and administrative services ... an introductory course in study techniques may together with an individual follow-up system result in a lower drop out rate during the initial phases of study ... there was no demonstrable extra effect from the course in study techniques among students who also received the follow-up letters" (Rekkedal & Hallem 1975).

From 1973 all students enrolling for correspondence courses consisting of more than one single course at NKI have started by going through the study technique course, and they are followed up by letters from a counsellor during the first two months of their studies.

A somewhat similiar system was tried out by The United States Air Force Institute (USAFI), where a reminder was sent to the students selected into an experimental group if they had not submitted their first assignment within three weeks. Those who had not started within six weeks received a second reminder. 60 per cent of the experimental group submitted one or more assignments, while about 50 per cent of a control group did so. Also a small - however, not significant - difference in completion rates was found. Brittain (1972) concludes: "Thus we feel that the evidence is convincing that follow-up cards can have significant effects on a clientele such as that served by USAFI." It is worth noticing that by incidence one also learned at USAFI that the different ways of formulating the message in such cards arouse different feelings. A message with a more humorous and easygoing approach reduced the number of students giving a negative response and at the same time increased the total response.

The Fernuniversitat in West-Germany is carrying out an interesting experiment on systematic individual counselling of new distance students, the so-called STEB project (Fernuniversitat 1978, Kuffner & Staller 1978, Kuffner 1979, Fritsch, Kuffner & Schuch 1979, Fritsch & Kuffner 1980). An information brochure designed as a correspondence course study unit was sent to the prospective students. The purpose of the unit is to help the students to understand the demands of distance study and to develop self understanding and sufficient insight to predict their own possibilities of study success. An automatic letter is received as feed-back on the students submitted answer to the assignments. We have not yet seen any information on possible effects of this counselling program on non-start and dropout rates.

2.2.2. Following up students

In general, the correspondence students can choose their own pace of study. This freedom may be considered an important advantage, especially for adult learners, because the time they can set aside for study varies dependent on other duties and responsibilities at any time. On the other hand, it is often too easy to put the studies aside, and it demands quite some initiative and strength of will to start anew.

In one of our earlier surveys (Rekkedal 1978) we asked the former correspondence students what they considered to be the main advantage and the main disadvantage of the correspondence study method.
Many students wrote "the free pace of study" as the answer to both questions. Some researchers have examined the effect of sending encouraging cards and letters to students taking an incidental interval in the studies. The Swedish correspondence institute, Hermods, has tried to measure the effect of reminders (Hermods 1967). Also efforts of contact at different intervals after enrolment were examined. The results, however, were ambiguous.

Pfeiffer (1969) has also carried out an experiment on the motivational effect of letters and cards on the students' submission of assignments. One experimental group received letters and the other cards, and these were mailed weekly to the students who had neither submitted an assignment nor received treatment during the preceeding four weeks. It was concluded that neither form letters nor post cards of encouragement resulted in a significant increase in the submission of correspondence lessons in the groups involved. Childs (1971) who reports the study adds that these results are somewhat at variance with results reported by Haberman for high school students in a study conducted at the University of Nebraska in 1954.

In 1970 NKI systematically started to mail a sequence of one encouraging card and two letters to students inactive for more than one month. An experiment was designed to examine the effect of this system on the submission of assignments by students studying course compositions in technical subjects. Students who had been inactive for one calendar month were selected into an experimental group and a control group. In the beginning of the calendar month after the inactive period the experimental group received a post card which was supposed to reflect a rather lighthearted humorous approach. If the students did not submit any assignments nor make any other formal contacts to the schools counsellors during the month in which they received the card, they would receive a letter signed by the principal and a questionnaire the next month. Students not responding to this letter would receive another letter the third month.

We concluded: "It seems that the sequence of post card and form letters which was used in this experiment actually resulted in a significant increase in the submission of lessons by correspondence students after a period of non study activity. Our data do not justify any assumptions about relations between other variables and this effect". (Rekkedal 1972b, p. 39). The results came out significantly only after the last mailing. From the experiment we could not conclude whether the total effect was a result of the last letter in the sequence or of the sequence as such. If the effect could be ascribed to the last letter, our results would be quite different from those reported by Brittain (1972) from USAFI as our first card was a rather light one, while the last letter was quite serious in tone and content.

2.2.3. Turn-round time.

Most administrators working in distance education today seem to put emphasis on reducing the turn-round time of the written assignments. Turn-round time is the lapse of time from the student sends in the answer until the feed-back from the tutor is received by the student. In most cases this time often tends to be relatively long. Delayed feed-back is considered to be an evident weakness in distance study (Holmberg 1977). The illustration below probably shows the most usual system for handling the student assignments in correspondence institutes.

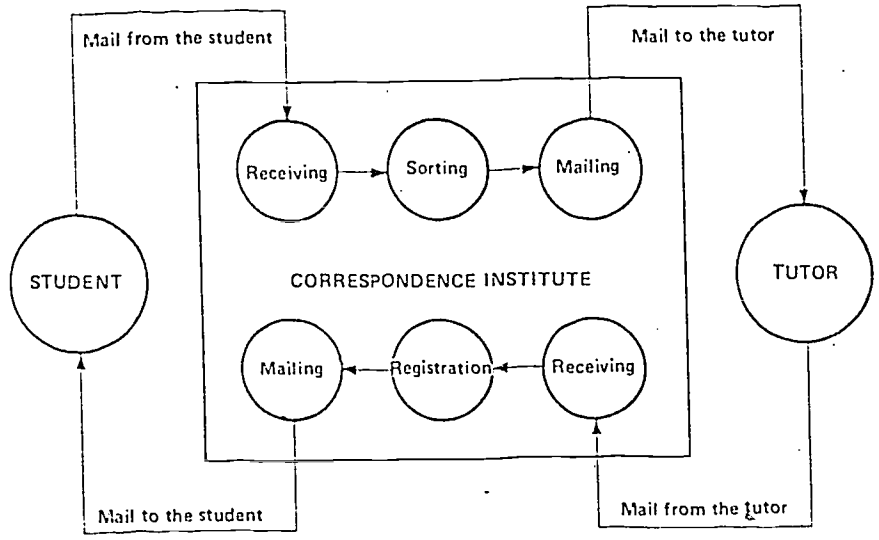

Figure 1. Factors making up turn-round time

Sloan (1965) reports that the time element involved in the feedback and getting answers to questions resulted in disinterest. In another survey (Harter 1969) the instructor's late return of corrected lessons was the most frequently mentioned reason for non-completion of study. This problem was also dealt with in a questionnaire distributed by the European Council for Education by Correspondence (CEC). The results showed that the average length of time from the school receives the student answers until they are returned is seven days. Consequently, the average turn-round time can be estimated to be around 10 days. (Saxe et.al. 1966).

Nilsen (1969/1974) discusses whether the two-way communication in correspondence education may be seen as a practical application of the reinforcement principle as developed in Skinner's theory of behaviour control. Husén (1960) has pointed out that the tutor's corrections and comments in distance education cannot be considered as reinforcers in this sense, since they reach the student too long time after the response has been given. Bååth (1979) takes the position that "...it appears quite possible to design correspondence teaching according to Skinner's behaviour control model. If so, the postal two-way communication must of course be thought of as having other functions than making reinforcement of students' responses possible." (Bååth 1979, p.23).

Even if the assignments do not constitute any means of reinforcement, other factors, such as information about results and motivation of the students to study, are important. In this respect we also feel that a rapid turn-round of assignments is essential.

In a project concerning optical reading of multiple choice answers and comments written by an automatic typewriter, (Bååth 1971) the turn-round time was reduced from approximately 10 days to 4.4 days. Turn-round time was not treated as experimental variable. Consequently, one does not know whether the positive results in the experiment were a result of the new treatment of the assignments or the reduced turn-round time. However, it was concluded that reduced turn-round time results in more satisfied students. Students receiving their answers within 5 days were satisfied, without exception. While 21 out of 59 students who received their papers after more than 7 days found this to be too slow.

At NKI we have carried out an experiment where the time for internal treatment was varied. A questionnaire showed that the median turn-round time, as reported by the students, was reduced from 8.3 to 5.6 days. The correlation between the experimental variable, turn-round time, and the criterion variable, completion, was significant on the .001-level. We also found that a faster turn-round in the experiment had a positive effect on "the total number of assignments submitted during the 3 first study months" ($p<.05$). The correlation with "pace of study" was positive, but not significant. Concerning student opinions, we concluded that students who received their assignments within 7 days or less, are satisfied. Some actually express a very positive attitude. While many of the students express that 8 days or more for feed back is too long (Rekkedal 1973 b). Thus, one week seems to be the turn-round time limit for acceptance by the majority of correspondence students (see also Bolstad (1973), Bååth & Månsson (1977)). In our opinion, correspondence institutes should aim to develop a system which would guarantee that the students would receive their papers back corrected and commented upon within one week. However, if appropriate action is not taken, this goal cannot be achieved.

2.2.4. Telephone tutoring

The telephone can be a useful means of communication in distance education. This is shown by several examples in a report from the University of Wisconsin (Parker & Riccomini, undated). In two reports from the EHSC project on "Two-way communication in correspondence education" Flinck (1975, 1978) mentions four ways of using the telephone in distance education.

1. Teleteaching - is operated by a two-way loudspeaking telephone placed in the classroom. Students not present can listen to the teaching going on in the classroom, and can even contribute in the verbal activities.

2. Telelecture - also operated by a two-way transmitter. The teacher can give a lecture to groups or individuals located any place that can be reached by telephone. Two-way communication is possible for all involved students by using loudspeakers and microphones.

3. Dial access - is an information service system more than a teaching system. It provides students with brief summaries on different topics.

4. Teletutoring - enables an individual student to communicate with the tutor and receive individual help during the studies. The discussions are always between one student and one tutor. (Flinck 1978 pp. 24-25).

This last mentioned system is of special interest in connection with individual distance study. This system is used for instance by ICS in Scranton (see Rekkedal 1974), where all correspondence students can call their tutors free of charge.

In his review of the literature, Flinck (1975) shows that teletutoring has been tried out in many different connections. Ahlm (1972) conducted an experiment on teletutoring among students studying mathematics by correspondence. Only 12 per cent of the students made use of the offer of calling their tutor. The results indicated, however, that the students who really called, achieved better results in their studies (no cause-effect relationship proved). Generally, it seems that only a minority of distance students make use of the telephone when this possibility is offered. In his thesis reporting fraom an experiment where the tutor took the initiative to the telephone contacts, Flinck concludes:

> "To sum up we can establish that telephone tutoring has been experienced positively by those students who received it. It has mainly been used to treat subject related problems but it has at the same time given the students an opportunity to discuss personal or social problems, a possibility which might have contributed to the students' feeling less isolated in their study work. We have also established that with the arrangement we have used in this investigation telephone tutoring has been of greater advantage to students studying a foreign language then to students studying a subject belonging to the social sciences".(Flinck 1978, p. 115).

Bååth (1979) has analysed which educational functions the telephone may have in correspondence education. We will briefly repeat some of Bååths views with emphasis on the starting phase:

> "The greatest potential value of telephone contacts as a supplement to correspondence teaching seems to lie in the opportunities to establish individual and individualized contacts between tutor and student provided by the telephone tutoring. ... applying a model such as Skinner's, telephone tutoring could fulfil a certain function - to help the tutor to get to know the individual student. ...
>
> According to Rothkopf's model, telephone tutoring could - above all - help students to get started. ...
>
> Also according to Ausubels model, individual telephone contacts could apparently be of some use in the starting phase of the course". (Bååth 1979, p. 116).

Bååth also discusses teaching by telephone in the light of other teaching models where the starting phase is not explicitly mentioned, however, general principles in the different teaching models would be of great importance also in the starting phase. This holds for instance for individual counselling and guidance where Bååth says:

> "With regard to cognitive learning goals, individual guidance over the telephone would appear to be valuable as a medium for the fulfilment of the following Gagnē teaching functions:
>
> - activating motivation
> - directing attention
> - stimulating recall of relevant prerequisites
> - providing learning guidance
> - providing feedback". (Bååth 1979 p. 117).

2.2.5. Social isolation

The problem of isolation is related to most of the research mentioned in the preceding pargraphs and also to the work of the correspondence tutor in general, which we will discuss later on (2.3). This problem is discussed by Wångdahl (1980). The feelings of isolation result from the fact that the individual correspondence student normally must do the work without direct contact with the tutor or fellow students.

As shown in paragraph 2.1.3. the isolation problem may not seem to be an important one when former students state their reasons for discontinuation. However, many of the problems normally mentioned by students and by researchers in drop out studies could, in our opinion, be described as aspects of the isolation problem. Some correspondence students actually choose this study method because they want to study on their own. The reasons for this may differ from individual to individual. Some students do not want their friends, colleagues or employers to know that they are studying, or they are afraid of the classroom situation, possibly because of previous failures.

Wångdahl (1980) states that "for these students social isolation is an advantage rather than a disadvantage". We feel that it remains to be seen whether this assumption really is correct. In an earlier study (Rekkedal 1978a) we found that everyone of the 14 students who at the time of enrolment wrote that the main reason for choosing correspondence study was that they preferred to study alone, had dropped out. These students also constituted the second least successful group measured by the total number of assignments submitted during the studies.

The problem of isolation is also mentioned briefly by Flinck (1978), who reports that 38 per cent of the students admit that they have experienced the feeling of being isolated (5% "to a large extent"), while i fact 50 per cent deny that they have felt isolated (27% "not at all") (Flinck 1978 p. 132).

In principle, the isolation problem in correspondence education can be solved or reduced through efforts within a pure system of distance education, such as telephone contacts, other tutor activities (see next paragraph), study groups etc, or through efforts which in fact involve non distance teaching such as local counselling, study center activities or combined education.

Ness' (1976) findings indicate that face to face teaching combined with correspondence education has a positive effect on completion rates. In Norway, where this kind of combined teaching has developed rapidly during the 70's, there has been a debate on whether the introduction of face to face teaching in a distance education system really is an advantage in distance education and to distance students in the long run (e.g. Skår 1977, Svendsen 1977). We will not enter this discussion here. But we feel that distance educators ought to believe in the possibilities and advantages of distance study methods and also in the students' capability to learn without having a teacher geographically present, so that efforts also are channelled into attempts to develop new ways of serving the distance learners within the limits of distance education.

2.3. The correspondence tutor

Although distance educators seem to agree that two way communication between student and tutor is one of the very important, if not the most important aspect of correspondence education, relatively few reports from research on the tutor's tasks and functions are published. Further, systematic correspondence tutor training does not seem to be given priority by most distance teaching institutions. This is not in accordance with the relatively common view that an experienced classroom teacher or a subject specialist will not automatically become a good correspondence tutor. In Norway two correspondence schools, NKI and NKS, have developed correspondence courses to qualify their prospective tutors for their work (NKS 1978, Rekkedal 1978b).

Bååth & Wångdahl (1976) have discussed the functions of the correspondence tutor in the light of a model for correspondence education, as shown below.

Student-tutor dialogue at a distance	Preproduced material: Little weight (-)	Preproduced material: Great weight (+)
Little weight (-)	CE, type 1	CE, type 2
Great weight (+)	CE, type 3	CE, type 4

Figure 2. A categorization of principal types of correspondence education (Bååth & Wångdahl 1976).

Type 1: Little weight is attached to both the didactic design of the material and the provisions for student-tutor dialogue. This type of correspondence education would be very similar to self-study.

Type 2: Great importance is attached to the design of the course material to make it suitable for distance study, while two-way communication is considered less important.

Type 3: Here, great weight is given to the relationship between student and tutor, while the material used is not specifically designed for distance study.

Type 4: Great importance is attached both to the material in order to make it suitable for distance learning and also to the two-way communication between student and tutor.

We feel that, in order to develop correspondence education methods in the future, we must concentrate on type 4 as described by Bååth and Wångdahl. In the experiment described here, however, we will concentrate on the tutor-student relationship, while the other schools that take part in the cooperative project in which this experiment is one part, will concentrate their research on developing efforts within the preproduced material to reduce the number of non-starters and early withdrawals.

Sjogren (1963) has conducted an experiment where three types of tutor behaviour were examined on the hypothesis that a more extensive feed-back would result in better student performance. For one group of students the tutor only corrected wrong answers and showed where the student could find the right answers. The second group received corrections, as well as subject related and encouraging comments. In the third group the tutors tried to establish a personal and supporting relationship as well, through individual comments and personal letters. No significant relationships were found between tutor behaviour and course completions.

At NKI and NKS two parallel experiments were carried out to examine the effect of introducing preproduced comments and solutions in addition to the tutor's individual corrections and comments (Rekkedal & Ljosså 1974). The hypothesis was that the preproduced material would release the tutor from repetitive work and thus make it possible for him/her to concentrate on satisfying the individual needs of the students. In one of the experiments a significantly larger number of the students who received the preproduced material completed their courses, while no significant differences were found in the other. Both experimental groups expressed extremely favourable attitudes towards the preproduced material as an extra offer.

How is the tutor's role normally perceived by the correspondence students? Some researchers have tried to answer this question. Grahm (1969) found that the students expressed favourable attitudes towards the assignments for submission. Nevertheless, in the way correspondence education is organized today, the tutor's work is ranked last of the following components: the text, the self-check exercises, the assignments for submission and the tutor's corrections and comments. This low ranking of the tutor's work holds both for its instructional and for its motivational value.

In the survey reported by Glatter and Wedell (1971) the students were critical towards what they had experienced from the work of their tutors. The majority did not agree with the following statements:

> "The lecturers or tutors quickly spot students' difficulties with their studies".
> "Comments on written work are full and explain faults clearly".
> "The tutors or lecturers take personal interest in the students' progress".
>
> (Glatter & Wedell, 1971 pp.102-103).

From these findings, Glatter & Wedell (1971 p.103) conclude:

> "The work of the correspondence tutors is rated disconcertingly low on these three criteria, although college lecturers, with all the advantages accruing from direct personal contact are seen in little better light. As far as correspondence is concerned, these responses point clearly to the need for a study of correspondence tutors and the special problems and skills associated with their work."

In our longitudinal survey at NKI we asked a number of questions in th same way in an enrolment questionnaire and in a follow-up questionnaire mailed at the time of completion or cancellation. Our intention was to try to find possible differences in the students' expectations and real experiences concerning certain aspects of correspondence study. The answers to the question about the tutors' corrections and comments were distributed as shown in table 1.

Table 1. "The tutors' corrections and comments will be/have been..." (Rekkedal 1978a).

	Enrolment questionnaire %	Follow-up questionnaire %
Very satisfying	26	20
Satisfying	63	56
Average	12	17
Not satisfying	1	7
Absolutely not satisfying	0	0

The results indicate that the expectations are not totally fulfilled for all the students, but even after the studies the majority seems to have a quite positive attitude concerning the work of their tutors.

When the work of the correspondence tutors is not always appreciated by the students, this may be a result of what we consider to be the discrepancy between the value attached to this part of correspondence study in theory, and how the tutors' role is arranged in practice. Harris' (1975) survey showed that most of the British correspondence tutors are part time employed (99%), that there are few training facilities available for these tutors, and that normally they are paid a fee per assignment corrected and commented. Tutors may often feel just as isolated as the correspondence students, and their tasks may become a routine, partly due to the division of work, which seems to be a characteristic of correspondence education. That the industrialization of education which has happened in modern correspondence education may involve certain risks is pointed out by Peters (1973). Even if such a specialized organization may be financially effective, it may lead to alienation on both the part of the tutor and the student.

We have also earlier discussed the role and functions of the correspondence tutor in the light of the same problems (Grepperud & Rekkedal 1976), where we tried to put forward some ideas of a new correspondence tutor role which we felt might result in an increased quality of distance education in the future. To some extent it is this role which is tried out in this experiment.

Therefore, we shall repeat some of the conclusions:

"We have investigated the tutor's role in correspondence education today, the status, wage-conditions as well as administrative organization, problems in connection with part-time work, and ways to solve some of these problems.

We wish to discuss how the relations between tutor and correspondence institute should be organized. If correspondence schools in the future too are to be able to cover the desired range of subjects, it will be necessary to base tutorial work on part-time tutors and these must to the greatest possible extent be offered satisfactory training, wages and conditions of employment. If, however, the tutor in the future is to hold a central position in the correspondence teaching system, we believe that correspondence schools too should rely on permanently appointed full-time tutors or people having correspondence tutoring as their main profession when possible. The conditions for organizing such a system are among others:

1. Size of institute and number of students.
2. Upgrading the role, status and prestige of the tutor.

We believe that few professionals today would accept work as full-time correspondence tutors. This is due to the low status of the "profession", its terminology and traditional expections of the tutor's work, such as correction and marking. We believe that serious work as tutors in distance or correspondence education can be just as inspiring and challenging as the work of any other teacher. There should hardly be any difficulties in recruitment to this profession.

Engagement of full-time tutors or establishing a recognized profession of correspondence tutoring would include a number of advantages.

1. It would lay the basis for serious and extensive training for the profession. See for instance Lamacraft's (1975) suggestion of training for correspondence tutors which consists of 450 teaching hours plus independent studies and different educational work at a correspondence institute including tutoring under supervision.

   A correspondence course for tutors having other relevant training in education would include 200 - 300 hours of specialized training for correspondence teaching.

2. The system would exclude most problems concerning wages and turn-round time.

3. The system would supply the method of distance education with know-how and professionalism, that we to some extent are in lack of today, because people with a first-hand knowledge of the methods and the learning problems of the students are only loosely attached to the correspondence institute which is responsible for the development and administration of the teaching system.

4. Professional full-time tutors should be able to spend their time partly in the training of other tutors, general counselling, course writing, editing and development, duties which today are taken care of largely by people having little experience of correspondence tutoring.

5. Office hours for tutors would make it easier for the students to contact their personal tutors in other ways than by letter, e.g. by telephone". (Grepperud & Rekkedal 1976 pp. 10-11).

2.4. Counselling

The term counselling may have a range of different connotations for different people. In correspondence education, tuition normally means marking and commenting on assignments, and in some cases, also other tutor-student contacts, such as face-to-face, telephone and audio cassettes as additional elements. By counselling we understand all other interactions between student and institute which are not strictly subject related. The counselling function thus embraces advice on general problems caused by part-time and correspondence study, course choice, future vocational possibilities and choices, and further education, examinations, registrations, financial support and payments (except routine installments). Some correspondence institutes do have special counsellors/advisors responsible for this kind of work, however, few, if any, employ professional counsellors to take care of more serious personal problems in the students' lives.

At NKI we have organized a counselling department responsible for the non-tutorial activities mentioned above. This system has proved to function fairly well. Nevertheless, the counsellers have not been able to give advice in subject related matters, and we have experienced a need for integrating the functions of the tutors and the counsellors.

The Open University has organized a system of tutor-counsellors at the foundation year. During their foundation year all students are assigned to a local tutor-counsellor, who will normally be responsible for all tuition and counselling (see Sewart 1980, Field 1978). According to Sewart, this system, which originally developed from a system where tutor and counselling functions were taken care of by different persons, has proved to be extremely efficient:

> "By these means, the University maintains a personal and continuing concern for, and interest in, each of its students. This element is arguably more developed in the Open University than in any other distance teaching system. Indeed, it is in this element alone that the Open University is now unique. There are, at present, many similiar institutions offering a teaching package, normally written materials, but sometimes also with audio-visual support through broadcasting or cassette, and some of these teaching packages are similar in standard to the Open University's teaching materials. I am aware of no comparable support service for sutdents learning at a distance. It may well be therefore that it is this individual support system which is the all important ingredient in the low drop-out rate which continues to elude other distance teaching systems". (Sewart, 1978 p.177).

As a result of the discussions carried out in the preceding sections, we find it highly relevant to experiment with a "new" tutor role within the framework of correspondence education. In the role of this tutor we try to integrate the functions of administrative measures, tuition and counselling.

3. EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

In this experiment we will try to integrate a number of variables which, according to earlier empirical and theoretical research may have a positive effect on study activity and completion rates in distance study.

The paper mentioned in the preceding chapter (by Bååth & Wångdahl (1976) is concluded as follows:

> "Maybe the tutor's role has to be changed at many schools, if they seriously want to provide correspondence education of that type where great weight is attached not only to the didactic functions of the preproduced course material, but also to the dialogue between student and tutor with its supposed motivational function". (Bååth & Wångdahl 1976, p.26).

The main intentions of this experiment are to construct a "new" way of organizing the tutors work during the initial phases of the correspondence study. In principle, this organization of the tutor's work may as well be introduced for students who have passed this stage. The reason for choosing the initial stages is that research has shown that the start of the studies involves great problems for many students and seems to be crucial for later study success.

The students selected for the experiment will during the first stages fo their studies be assigned to a personal tutor who will follow them through all their courses during a certain part of the courses. (The formal structure of the courses is explained in section 4.1.). The result of this organization will be that a number of aspects of the tutor's work will be different from the work normally undertaken by the correspondence tutor.

In connection with the description of the experiment we must stress the fact that, for the past 10 years, NKI has taken the consequences of findings from theory and empirical studies conducted at NKI, and elsewhere, which already have led to developments of the tutor's role, counselling and follow up of students. The students selected for the control group in this experiment will not loose any of these measures.

The main difference (i.e. the independent variable) between the treatment of the experimental and the control group is that the experimental group will communicate with one personal tutor who integrates all the teaching and counselling functions, and consequently constitute an educational offer which we assume to be more efficient. In the following paragraphs we will try to describe the experimental role of this tutor which then constitutes the experimental variable under examination.

3.1. Personal tutor.

Correspondence education has developed into an activity where the tasks to a large degree are divided between departments and individuals responsible for very specialized functions. Thus Peters (1973) considered correspondence education to be an industrialized form of teaching. In modern correspondence education also the teachers functions have been divided. Another part of the total picture is the subject specialization between tutors. Most correspondence tutors teach one or a few subjects. Students studying more than one subject will normally have a number of different tutors, who will all feel responsible for their own part of the whole system. With reduced insight in the total system and lack of understanding of the student's total situation, it is difficult for the tutors to give maximum support. On the other hand students get confused and they do not know where or from whom they can receive help to solve different problems which might arise.

At NKI we have from time to time discussed the possibilities of arranging the system so that the student would communicate with one tutor only during a certain part of the studies. One of the drawbacks would be that the tutor would have to teach more than one subject and consequently do a less specialized job. However, we believe that the advantages are evident. The tutor's work would become more varied, the tutor and the student would get to know each other better, the tutor would know which courses the student studies, which courses the student has completed, his/her grades, strong and weak points etc., and which courses the student will proceed to. The tutor may point out relationships between different subjects and courses and help the student to transfer the knowledge gained through one course to another. This organization also opens possibilities for the tutor to act as counsellor for the student (see below).

3.2. Employment

Correspondence tutors are normally paid on a per assignment basis. It is difficult to decide which consequences this financial arrangement leads to concerning the work done by individual tutors and in general. However, we can easily think of negative effects for the quality of teaching (Rekkedal & Grepperud 1976). Harris says in this connection:

> "In almost all cases the payment to tutors may be on a per student basis, but normally on a fee per script, or essay submitted to the tutor. This has obviously educational disadvantages, related to the length of student script or written assignment and length of tutor comment. Yet there appears to be few practical alternative bases of payment". (Harris 1975, p.5).

The tutor in the experiment is employed on a fixed salary basis, and we believe that this fact in itself has a positive effect on the organization of the teaching; e.g. that the time allocated to the individual assignment to a larger extent will be in accordance with the student's need for corrections, comments and advice.

3.3. Integrated tutor - counsellor

In the experiment the personal tutor works full-time within the school's offices together with the student counsellors. The counsellors will normally not possess sufficient subject knowledge to help the students with subject related learning difficulties. To a certain extent this part of the student-counsellor contact, therfore, may turn out to constitute some kind of "pseudo counselling", i.e. general statements and general advice, which might make the student feel less isolated, but which does not really help the student with the actual planning and organizing of the studies or solving the student's specific learning problems.

When students in the ordinary system of correspondence education make contact with the school concerning their learning problems, the administration will have to refer to the tutors. Consequently it will normally take some time before they can get help. At NKI we have found that this might constitute an important problem. In a follow-up questionnaire the three most frequent answers to an "open ended" question on what is "the largest disadvantage" in correspondence education were:

"Too long time to get answers to questions, too long turn-round time"	18%
Too free, easy to put the studies aside, free study tempo	16%
Lack of contact with tutor and/or school	13%"

(Rekkedal 1978a, p. 117).

In the same survey student counselling was the element of correspondence education where the students' attitudes changed most from the period of enrolment to the follow up questionnaire.

Table 2. "The counselling of the students will be/was": (Rekkedal 1978b, p.108).

	Enrolment questionnaire %	Follow-up questionnaire %
Very good	32	9
Good	49	41
Average	16	34
Below average	3	8
Bad	0	8

In a system where the roles of the tutor and counsellor are integrated in one person, this person can immediately start working on the student's problems, whether these concern subject matter, learning problems, personal difficulties, administrative procedures or financial matters, The tutor will also be in a position where his/her experiences with the student increase the possibilities of giving sound advice.

In fact,we believe that the introduction of a personal tutor and the integrated role of the tutor-counsellor constitutes the most significant aspect of the experimental variable. This aspect is also a necessary condition for the other variations from the normal organization included in the experiment.

3.4. Turn-round time (circuit time)

The turn round of assignments in the system of correspondence education is illustratated graphically in Fig. 1 (2.2.3).

A tutor working full time within the administration may reduce the turn-round time significantly. Firstly, we may guarantee that the assignments are corrected and commented the same day as they are received. Secondly, two postal handlings are removed from the system. In the study mentioned earlier (Rekkedal 1973b) the reduced turn-round time of about 3 days was achieved by a similar procedure. If the tutors working part-time at home do not manage to return the assignments the same day, the reduction of turn-round time in the experimental system will be even larger.

We would like to stress the fact that all tutors working part-time at NKI are directed to return the assignments after maximum 1 day as the normal procedure. In NKI course for correspondence tutors (Rekkedal 1978b) the importance of reducing handling time of the assignments is greatly emphasized, and we feel strongly that most tutors understand this, and that they do their best to live up to the expectations.

3.5. Telephone tutoring

Telephone tutoring is systematically included in the experiment. The tutor will phone all students, who have given their telephone number, both as part of the teaching, i.e. in connection with the students' answers to the assignments, and as part of the follow-up routines for students in the beginning of the courses and as one of the means in the continuous and systematic follow-up of inactive students during the whole course. During the experiment the tutor will try to motivate all the students to give their telephone number and also inform on how and when telephone contact can be established. This is done through the comments on the student papers and through follow-up letters. In addition all students are invited to phone the tutor. These possibilities are also described in the "Tutor's presentation" (see 3.8.3).

3.6. Initial follow-up

The tutor will personally contact all the experimental group students approximately 10 days after the dispatch of the study material. If possible, the tutor will try to reach the students by telephone. The tutor will initiate a conversation about the received material, about possible problems concerning the start of the studies, about the courses and about the future cooperation. A form letter will be sent to the other students. (Form letter 1, Appendix 2).

The tutor will contact the students again approximately 1 month later. During the telephone conversation the tutor will then discuss the student's work/lack of work, possible problems and/or other matters raised by the student. Again, students who have not been reached by telephone will receive a form letter (2A if they have not yet submitted any assignments, 2B if they have started).

The third step in the initial follow-up program will be taken through phone or letters. Discussions will centre around the work done until then, about the cooperation and about the student's study progress. An individual letter will be sent to students who have not been reached by telephone. If they have not started to study the courses, the letter contains advice about the studies and specifically advice on how to start with the first study units.

At NKI one of the consequences taken from the results of earlier research is that all students are followed up during the initial phases of the study. Thus, as part of the normal routines the control group will receive a form letter signed by one of the counsellors approximately one week after enrolment and another letter one month after enrolment. The last one is printed in two different versions, one meant for students who have not started and one for students who have submitted at least one assignment. The difference between the experimental and the control groups, therefore, is mainly a question of the degree of individualization that can be achieved through the personal tutor counsellor.

3.7. Follow-up of inactive students

All students studying correspondence courses at NKI are involved in a continuous follow-up program. This program which consists of a sequence of three contacts to inactive students, was described in paragraph 2.2.2.

The experimental group students in this project are followed up in a similar way. The main difference is again that the contacts are established by the tutor-counsellor, personally by telephone or through individualized letters. The contents will then depend on the student's work, the earlier cooperation etc.

3.8. Other aspects of the tutor's work

3.8.1. Introduction to study techniques

All students studying course compositions at NKI are requested to start by completing an introductory course in study techniques. The course contains one single assignment for submission. The tutor working in the experiment will also take care of evaluating and commenting upon the work done by the experimental group students in this course. There will be no other differences between the groups with respect to this aspect of the teaching system.

3.8.2. Preproduced tutor comments

The use of preproduced comments is not systematically defined in the experiment. However, complete and detailed solutions to all assignments including some standard comments are developed for all courses included in the experiment. The tutor will enclose them with the corrected papers according to his judgement of the students' individual needs.

3.8.3. "Tutor's presentation"

All the NKI's part-time tutors have to prepare a personal presentation of themselves. This tutor's presentation normally includes a photograph of the tutor. The presentation is sent to the student as a matter of routine, and is enclosed with the first assignment returned from he tutor.

Students in the experimental group will receive this tutor's presentation immediately after enrolment. The tutor's presentation also describes the tutor's role and functions and the possibility of reaching the tutor by telephone. Consequently, these students will in fact be able to establish contact with the tutor themselves, even before sumbission of the first assignment. If they don't contact the tutor when problems arise, the tutor will contact the students in any case. This possibility may be important when one is trying to reduce the number of non-starters. (See Appendix 3 for the Tutor's presentation).

3.9. Summary of the tutor's role in the experiment

As described in the preceding paragraphs, the experimental variable represents an integrated series of efforts which we believe will have positive effects on the study situation. We also believe these effects to be general. The experiment is concentrated on the initial phases because this period is considered to be extremely important for study success or withdrawal.

Because of the complex nature of the experiment variable, possible differences concerning results/rate of withdrawals/completions etc. cannot be ascribed to one single aspect of the experimental variable. In this experiment, it is the combination of different efforts and the organization of the tutor's role as a personal tutor/tutor-counsellor which is compared with a "traditional system" including part-time correspondence tutors. Table 3 gives a survey of the experiment variable compared with the treatment of the control group. Table 3 gives a description of the experimental variable (X_1) and the control variable (X_2).

Aspect	Experimental X_1	Control X_2
1. The tutor	One tutor during the 3-11 first single courses	Different tutors (the tutor can teach more than one course)
2. Employment	Full-time employed on a fixed salary working within the institute	Part-time employed working at home on a per assignment basis
3. Teaching/ counselling	Integrated tutor - counsellor. Same person responsible for teaching and counselling	Tutor normally responsible only for correcting and commenting on the assignments. Separate counsellors take care of general problems
4. Turn-round time	All asignments are returned to the students the same day as they are received (delays) reduced to a minimum)	Emphasis on reducing turn-round time. The tutors are requested to return the assignments within one day. Nevertheless, two extra postal services normally included

Aspect	Experimental X_1	Control X_2
5. Introduction to study techniques	Same tutor teaches the one unit course in study techniques	Separate part-time tutor also in this course
6. Initial follow-up	All students will be contacted 10 days, 1 month and 2 months after enrolment, preferably by telephone. Letters are sent to students not reached by telephone. Two different versions of the first letter depending on start/ non-start. Last letter is a personal one. All contacts made by the tutor	All students are followed up about 1 week and 1 month after enrolment by printed form letters signed by a counsellor. Two different editions of the last letter, depending on start/ non-start
7. Follow-up of inactive students	All students contacted by telephone or individual letter after one month of of inactivity, if necessary in a sequence of three contacts during three months	All inactive students are follow up in a sequence of one printed card and 2 form letters with a printed signature during three months
Students in both groups are treated individually if they apply for an interval in their studies or before cancelling the study contact.		
8. Telephone tutoring	All students are invited to call the tutor during normal office hours. The tutor takes the initiative to telephone contacts as part of the follow-up system and when needed in connection with the assignments	Some tutors invite the students to contact them by telephone. No other initiative is taken from the tutors
9. Preproduced tutor comments	Preproduced comments developed, used when needed	No systematic use of preproduced comments
10. Tutor's presentation	The presentation is sent to the students enclosed with the first study material	The presentation of the different tutors is enclosed with the first assignment returned from the tutor

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

4.1. The courses and the selection of students

The NKI course compositions consist of a number of single correspondence courses which constitutes a complete education preparing the students for different technical vocations.

The course compositions are formally structured into different levels and sublevels. The introductory level is divided into 3 parallel streams dependent on the student's previous education. The structure is illustrated in Fig.3 below:

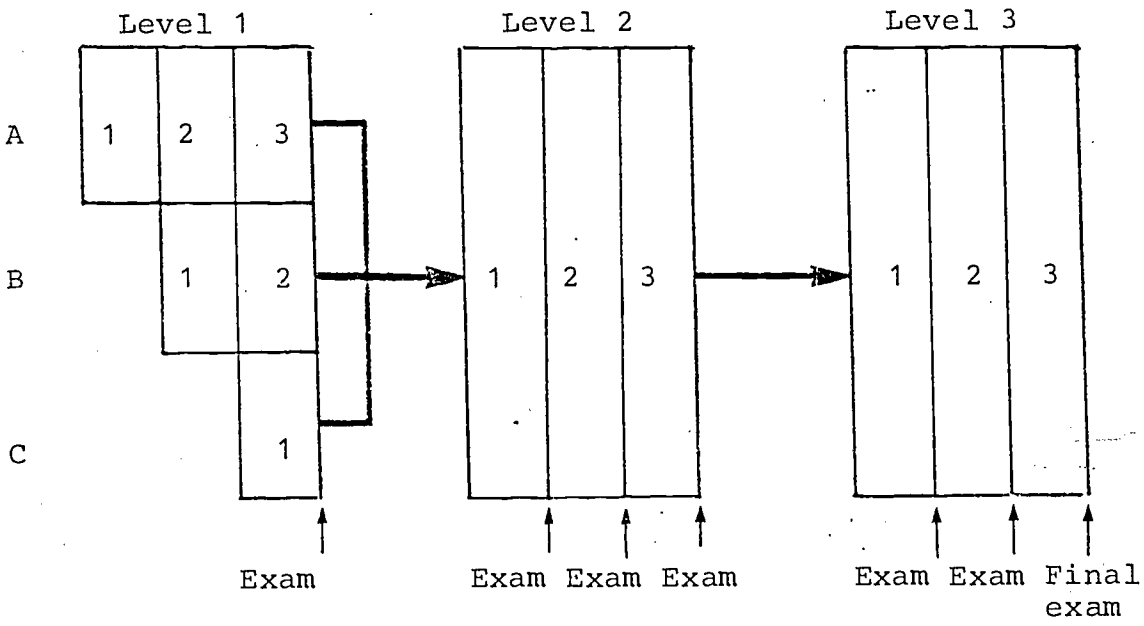

Figure 3. The structure of the NKI course compositions.

Students enrolled for stream C, those who have the highest level of previous previous education, are not included in the experiment. Because the students' previous schooling varies more than can be catered for by this system, the individual student may be exempted for additional courses within the first level. Students who are going to study less than 3 courses pluss study techniques, were not included in the experiment.

New enrollees were selected into the experiment during the period from 1.11.1980 to 1.3.1981. The first sublevel of the streams A and B contains from 5 to 11 single courses. Totally, approximately 40 different course compositions containing 28 different single courses, plus the introductory course in study technique, are included in the experiment. The courses are basic ones and can be taught by one single tutor, having competence within basic technology and administrative subjects.

4.2. Research design

One experimental and one control group were established by ramdomization, based on the last digit of the student identification number. As we wanted a relatively large experimental group, students having last digits 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 were assigned to this group, while students having last digit 0, 3, 6, 9 were assigned to the control group. The design takes this form:

E : R X_1 O_1

C : R X_2 O_2

E = Experimental group
C = Control group
R = Random selection into groups
X_1 = Experimental variable
X_2 = Treatment of control group
O_1 and O_2= Measures of study success, rate of completion, student attitudes

In addition, we will try to assess other effects and consequences, i.e. costs, organization, tutor attitudes etc.

4.3. Questionnaire design and collection of data

A minor questionnaire was developed to assess the students' attitudes. The questionnaire contains questions about the correspondence study in general, the tutor's work and counselling to examine whether different aspects of correspondence education are experienced differently by the students in the two groups, or whether their subjective experiences as measured by the questionnaire are more or less similar.

The questions have been taken partly from earlier surveys at NKI (Rekkedal 1973b, 1978a) and partly adapted from similar questions used in the "Two-way communication in correspondence education" project (Flinck 1978, Bååth 1980) See Appendix 1 for a copy of the questionnaire. Regrettably, we did not have time to try out the questionnaires before using them in the experiment. We do not expect this fact to cause special problems, as both the questions and the data collection methods have been tried out under more or less the same conditions. During the experiment the questionnaires will be mailed to the student, enclosed with the last assignment corrected and commented by the tutor. Students whose courses are cancelled during the (trial) period of the experiment will receive the questionnaire at the time of the cancellation. The rest of the students will receive the questionnaire when the experiment is brought to an end, probably late autumn 1981. One reminder will be sent to students not returning the questionnaire within approximately 14 days.

Other data will be collected from the files and study records, and from minute records kept by the tutor on follow-up letters, special measures, phone calls, and use of preproduced comments.

4.4. Summary of the problems to be investigated

In this report we have presented some problems concerning non-start, early withdrawals and drop-out in correspondence education in the light of previous research and theoretical studies. We have also discussed ideas about how we believe that some of these problems can be reduced by introducing a "new" tutor role into the system of correspondence education. An in depth description of this tutor role has been presented, where the functions of this "personal tutor/ counsellor" also is compared with what, in our opinion, seems to be the more usual "subject specialist teacher" in correspondence education. In the role of the personal tutor/ counsellor we have tried to integrate a number of functions normally carried out by different persons in a "specialized and industrialized" system of distance education and also other measures which we believe may have a positive influence on the quality of teaching.

Very often the correspondence student who has enrolled for more than one single course will have to communicate with one tutor in each different subject, in addition to a number of different people within the institute. The tutor is responsible for commenting on and correcting the student's written answers only. We have pointed out several possible results from assigning the student to one single tutor/counsellor to be the main personal contact from the time of enrolment and through the critical initial phases of study.

As a result of the experiment described here, we hope to find some of the answers to the following questions:

1. Will this organization have any effect on the number of students starting their studies (defined by submitting one or more assignmets)?

2. Will this organization have any effect on drop-out rates during the early stages of study?

3. Will this organizatin have any effect on pace of study and student activity?

4. Will this organization affect student attitudes towards correspondence education in general and specific aspects of correspondence study?

5. What will the consequences of this new tutor role be regarding the organization of other aspects of the correspondence education system as well as the costs of correspondence education?

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SPØRRESKJEMA

I forbindelse med vurdering av en del administrative forhold vedrørende undervisning, studieoppfølging og rådgivning ved NKI-skolen er vi interessert i å få svar på en del generelle spørsmål om hvordan elevene opplever brevundervisningen. Vi ville derfor være svært takknemlig om du kunne ta deg tid til å fylle ut dette skjemaet så nøyaktig som mulig.

Vennlig hilsen

Torstein Rekkedal

Torstein Rekkedal
Forskningsleder

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Elevnummer . . . . . .

1. Hvis du skal vurdere brevunderivsning som studieform, hvordan mener du den har vært?

Svært bra	Bra	Vet ikke	Dårlig	Svært dårlig
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Studiematerielle har vært

Svært bra	Bra	Vet ikke	Dårlig	Svært dårlig
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Innsendingsoppgavene har vært

Svært lette	Lette	Middels	Vanskelige	Svært vanskelige
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Arbeidet med innsendingsoppgavene har vært

Svært stimulerende	Stimulerende	Vet ikke	Kjedelig	Svært kjedelig
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Når det gjelder lærerens arbeid og kommentarer til mine besvarelser, har jeg vært

Svært fornøyd	Fornøyd	Vet ikke	Misfornøyd	Svært misfornøyd
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Når det gjelder hjelp og støtte fra læreren, mener jeg at jeg har fått:

Absolutt tilstrekkelig hjelp	som regel tilstrekkelig hjelp	Vet ikke	som regel ikke tilstrekkelig hjelp	Absolutt ikke tilstrekkelig hjelp
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Som brevskoleelev kan det forekomme at man føler seg litt isolert. Man kan føle seg alene med forholdsvis små muligheter for å få støtte og må greie mye på egen hånd. Har du foreløpig følt deg isolert i dine studier?

Ja, i høy grad	Ja, til en viss grad	Vet ikke	Nei, ikke særlig	Nei, ikke i det hele tatt
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Føler du at du har fått tilstrekkelig råd og veiledning fra skolen, lærer eller rådgiver til å gjennomføre studiene så langt?

Ja, absolutt	Ja, stort sett	Vet ikke	Nei, stort sett ikke	Nei, absolutt ikke
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. Føler du at skolen og/eller læreren har fulgt deg opp gjennom studiene utenom selve oppgavebesvarelsene?

Absolutt	Til en viss grad	Vet ikke	Ikke særlig	Absolutt ikke
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Tror du at muligheten for telefonkontakt med lærer er til noen hjelp i brevstudiet?

Ja, i høy grad	Til en viss grad	Vet ikke	Nei, neppe	Nei, absolutt ikke
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Tror du telefonen som kontaktmiddel fører til (ville føre til) at brevskoleeleven føler seg mindre isolert?

Ja, absolutt	Til en viss grad	Vet ikke	Nei, neppe	Nei, absolutt ikke
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Har du fått noen oppfordring eller mulighet til å ringe lærerer?

Ja ☐ Nei ☐

13. Har du ringt læreren?

Ja ☐ Nei ☐

14. Har læreren ringt deg?

Ja ☐ Nei ☐

15. Tenk tilbake på besvarelsene dine. Prøv å anslå så nøyaktig som mulig hvor lang tid det tok i gjennomsnitt fra du sendte besvarelsene til du fikk dem tilbake?

☐ 1 dager	☐ 2 dager	☐ 3 dager	☐ 4 dager	☐ 5 dager	☐ 6 dager	☐ 7 dager	☐ 8 dager	☐ 9 dager	☐ 10 dager

16. Hva synes du om denne tiden?

Altfor lang tid	Litt lang tid	Normalt	Fortere enn ventet	Overraskende fort
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Hvis du har andre positive eller negative synspunkter når det gjelder dine foreløpige erfaringer som brevskoleelev, kan du bruke plassen nedenfor.

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Mange takk.

NKI-SKOLEN
Skole og forlag / Ideell stiftelse

Prof. Kohts vei 108,
Postboks 10, 1321 Stabekk
Telefon: (02) 12 29 50
Bankgiro: 8002. 05. 02391
Postgiro: 4 30 21 21

INGENIØRSKOLE
ARBEIDSLEDERSKOLE
PERSONALOPPLÆRING
HANDELSSKOLE
BREVSKOLE

Form letter 1

Stabekk,

Først vil jeg ønske deg velkommen som elev.

Når du nå skal sette i gang med brevstudiet ditt, vil du merke at det er noe forskjellig fra "vanlig" skolegang. Det vil kreve en litt annen studieteknikk enn det du kanskje er vant med fra før.

Derfor har vi sammen med det ordinære studiemateriellet sendt deg "Lær bedre", som er et hefte med praktiske øvinger i studieteknikk.

Jeg vil anbefale deg å arbeide godt med dette heftet og løse alle oppgavene. Når du har gjort det, kan du sende "Lær bedre" til skolen. Du vil da få tilbake heftet med kommentarer fra meg sammen med et kursbevis.

Sammen med studiemateriellet får du også elevorienteringen for brevskolen. Denne må du lese nøye gjennom, for her finner du en del opplysninger som vil hjelpe deg i studiearbeidet. Jeg vil særlig vise til det som står om studieplan på side 4. Du har fått en leseplan, og den leser du på samme måte som beskrevet for studieplanen.

Studiebrevene bør du begynne å arbeide med parallelt med "Lær bedre". Prøv om du kan omsette studieteknikken i praksis. Greier du det, er jeg sikker på at det vil gå greit med studiearbeidet.

Jeg vil være din brevskolelærer og din personlige kontakt ved skolen, og jeg ser derfor gjerne at du tar kontakt med meg dersom det er noe du lurer på. Det kan du gjøre enten ved å skrive et lite brev eller ringe (02) 12 29 50. Selvfølgelig er du også velkommen til et besøk her ved skolen hvis du bor slik at det passer.

Jeg håper vi går en hyggelig samarbeidstid i møte og ønsker deg lykke til med "Lær bedre" og de første studiebrevene.

Hilsen din brevskolelærer

Knut Finsen
Lærer nr. 1234.

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Form letter 2 A

Stabekk,

Det er omtrent en måned siden du meldte deg som brevskoleelev, og jeg sender deg noen ord igjen.

Jeg kan ikke se å ha mottatt din første besvarelse. Skulle det være slik at du ennå ikke har sendt inn noe besvarelse, vil jeg anbefale deg å gjøre det så snart som mulig - det er alltid en fordel å komme rask i gang.

I alle fall håper jeg at du har begynt å "kikke" på studiebrevene og satt deg grundig inn i din leseplan. Prøv å utnytte de rådene du har funnet i "Lær bedre".

Når du kommer i gang med studiearbeidet, er det viktig å holde jevn studieaktivitet. Det viser seg nemlig at det ofte er tungt å komme i gang etter kortere eller lengre avbrudd i studiene.

Skulle du av en eller annen grunn komme til å ta et studieopphold på 1 måneds varighet eller mer, vil jeg for ordens skyld minne om at du må gi skolen skriftlig beskjed om dette.

Forøvrig håper jeg alt går greit, og som jeg tidligere har nevnt, hører jeg gjerne fra deg dersom det skulle dukke opp problemer e.l.

Lykke til med studiene!

Hilsen din brevskolelærer

Knut Finsen
Lærer nr. 1234

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Form letter 2 B

Stabekk,

Det er omtrent en måned siden du meldte deg som brevskoleelev, og jeg sender deg noen ord igjen.

Jeg ser at du er kommet i gang med studiene, og det synes jeg er hyggelig. Vår erfaring er nemlig den at elever som kommer raskt i gang med studiearbeidet, ofte gjør det bra i fortsettelsen.

Prøv å holde jevn studieaktivitet fremover - det tror jeg er et godt råd. Det viser seg ofte at det er tungt å komme i gang igjen etter kortere eller lengre avbrudd i studiene.

Skulle du av en eller annen grunn komme til å ta et studieopphold på 1 måneds varighet eller mer, vil jeg for ordens skyld minne om at du må gi skolen skriftlig beskjed om dette.

Forøvrig håper jeg alt går greit og som jeg tidligere har nevnt, hører jeg gjerne fra deg dersom det skulle dukke opp problemer e.l.

Fortsatt lykke til med studiene!

Hilsen din brevskolelærer

Knut Finsen
Lærer nr. 1234

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Kjære elev !

På NKI-skolens og egne vegne ønsker jeg deg hjertelig velkommen til studiet.

For at du skal få en viss oppfatning av hvem din brevskolelærer er, skal jeg fortelle litt om meg selv.

Jeg er 34 år gammel, er gift og har 2 barn. Av utdannelse er jeg Bilteknisk Ingeniør fra NKI's Ingeniørhøgskole. Jeg har også bedriftsøkonomisk utdannelse fra Bedriftsøkonomisk institutt. I tillegg til dette er jeg også utdannet driftsingeniør fra NKI's Brevskole og jeg har derfor godt kjennskap til brevstudier.

I de siste 10 år har jeg administrert et mindre bilverksted i Oslo, men er nå ansatt ved NKI-skolen.

Jeg bor litt utenfor Oslo-sentrum i nær kontakt med skog og mark, slik at jeg har rik anledning til friluftsliv. Orienteringssporten har jeg dyrket i mange år og har i de siste 3-4 år engasjert meg sterkt i fotballstyret i Vålerengen IF.

Jeg vil være din brevskolelærer i de kursene som inngår i det 1. trinnet av studiet ditt.

Hvis du ser på studieforslaget som du har mottatt, vil du se hvilke kurs dette omfatter.

Jeg skal altså være din lærer og veileder gjennom den første delen av ditt studium og håper med dette å få i stand en åpen og hyggelig kontak med deg.

Gjennom en felles inssats og et godt samarbeid er jeg sikker på at du vil få det rette utbytte av studiet ditt.

Skulle du få noen form for problemer underveis, må du ikke være redd for å spørre, ta gjerne kontakt med meg ved å ringe til NKI-skolen (02-12 29 50).

Jeg vil på min side følge deg i din studieframgang og gjøre mitt til at eventuelle problemer kan drøftes og løses på en fornuftig måte.

Jeg tar kontakt med deg om noen dager for å høre om det skulle være noen startvansker - lykke til så lenge.

Med vennlig hilsen

Knut Finsen
Lærer nr. 1234

55